

Ep #54: My Victory Practice



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Leah Badertscher

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Ep #54: My Victory Practice

“I’m telling you something which will help you survive through all odds. Whenever you face anything and you don’t have an answer, just call yourself inside and say, victory. Lean on victory. Make it a guide word. Make it a precious word.

I don’t know what you are, who you are, why you are. Don’t ask questions. Don’t do your analysis. Don’t try to solve problems. Just utter the word victory. With just the mental utterance of this word, your whole life will change. Mentally utter the word victory. Try it. You’ll find the strength of 100 angels behind you.” Yogi Bhanan.

In today’s episode, I want to talk with you about my victory practice and a very particular specific manifestation of that in my creative process, which is a series of victory paintings I have been creating for a while now. And I also want to offer some suggestions for how you can cultivate your own victory practice so that you do also have something that will help you not only survive through all odds, but thrive.

You are listening to *The Art School Podcast*, a show for artists and creatives who want to become the next greatest version of themselves. Learn how to cultivate an extraordinary way of being and take the mystery out of making money, and the struggle out of making art. Here is your host, master certified life coach, artist, and former lawyer, Leah Badertscher.

Hello, everyone. How are you doing? I love it when you write in and tell me how you’re doing, and I especially love right now we are still in Art School. We have just one week left, but I get to hear from many of you listeners who are in The Art School about how you’re doing, and I love that.

As much as I love doing this podcast, I also prefer a conversation that’s not just one-sided. So do continue to write in and let me know how you’re doing. Let me know topics you’re interested in hearing more about on this podcast, and just what’s up in your life. I especially love when you tag me

[The Art School Podcast](#) with Leah Badertscher

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

in photos of the art babies, that maybe something you've listened to on the podcast has inspired that is everything I could ask for. So thank you so much for that.

So, a lot of creativity going on in The Art School, creating art, creating money, really creating who we want to be from the inside out. And in my own life too these days, there is a lot happening, a lot going on. Our house continues to come along, our new house that we're building out here in the country. If you've never met me before, we live on 40 acres in Southwest Michigan.

Michigan is beautiful. I grew up in Iowa and I love Iowa and I also love Michigan. It feels like a very great place for my children to have their childhoods and for us to call home now. So the house is going up. I cannot wait.

I was hoping we would be in by Christmas this year, but I've decided I'm just going to plug in a little mini tree and call it good then. We'll be in soon enough. And if you don't follow me on Instagram, sometimes I post new house pictures and things like that. I'm nuts for stuff like that. I post some fun things like that. I also post updates about the podcast and things that are going on in The Art School and other coach offerings I have and just things in general that I hope are positive and empowering infusions to your day. So my handle is @leahcb1 over on Instagram. So I would love to connect with you there.

Other things going on, we had an interview last night. We were interviewed by a gentleman from a dog rescue league because hopefully, sometime in the near future, we will also be adding a dog to our family and the farm. So I'm so excited about that, so is my husband, and the kids are beyond-beyond. So that's pretty special and sweet to see.

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

And everyone here is also getting excited for the holidays. We had our first snow. It's beautiful. And I'm also looking forward to the fact that I know I'm going to Arizona in January, because just about when I'm like, yep, it's been enough snow and enough darkness, I'll be heading to Arizona, hopefully with some of you for the retreat, of the decade, for the decade.

So, today's podcast, I wanted to do something different. I thought, what would be awesome would be more in-person experiences, obviously, but also to bring you into a little bit of my creative process and some things that I am working on. Like, I'm bringing you into my studio, not just to show you what I'm working on, but also to show you how I weave this coaching work, this cultivation of an extraordinary way of being in mind, body, and spirit, how I weave that into my creative process and my life as an artist and really just my life as a human being and what that looks like.

Because one question I get over and over again from people is, yes, now I get the concept of it, but how? How do I live this? And it really is a practice. And that's what a creative practice is all about is the moment by moment. It's a practice of meditation which is moment by moment. To me, it's a spiritual practice which is moment by moment.

And so something that I wanted to make really clear today is that, too often, I think people misunderstand that a spiritual practice and a meditation practice, they understand that it's something that supports your life, but also we have this almost unconscious thought that it's also separate from our life and somehow divorced from our life.

And I see this reflected sometimes when I have people say to me, "I'm kind of surprised to realize that you're so pragmatic and that you also have this focus on creating material wealth and financial success because I thought you were very spiritual and intuitive and creative," like those things contradict each other. They do not.

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

Or they say it the other way, “I thought you were so pragmatic and practical and grounded, I didn’t realize, it’s kind of shocking to me to find out you are so spiritual and intuitive and creative.” And once again, those things are not at opposite ends of the spectrum. Those are available to all of us, as healthy, meaning whole, like fully integrated human beings.

Those are aspects of being human that are available to each of us that we can cultivate. And with focus and practice, not only on our mats, not only in houses of worship and prayer. Not only in the silence of our mind when we’re meditating, but out in life every day. Life offers us so many opportunities to put these principles to work in action. And to me, that’s spirituality.

To me, spirituality is pragmatic or it’s not spirituality. And to me, pragmatism must include spirituality or it’s useless, which is not, therefore, pragmatic. So, this victory series of paintings that I started was obviously inspired by that quote I shared in the intro from Yogi Bajan. I adore that quote. And what also resonated with me, a motif that occurs a lot throughout my art anyway, is this idea of bringing things that I feel, know to be true, and yet are invisible. But that doesn’t make them any less real or true. But I also understand that, as human beings having this physical experience, how much we rely on our senses.

And so through much of my artwork, what I have learned and discovered that it’s about, even what so much of my internal motivation and desire to create art is about is taking this relationship and this knowing I have of these truths and forces, like love, that are invisible and so very real, and then making them visible, because that is immensely reassuring to us as humans when we are so reliant on our senses.

And I know I love, in my environment, to have physical expressions and representations and manifestations, embodiments of the invisible energies

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

that I know are very real and present in the world, but I love to have that physical expression of it.

I love the quote from Kahlil Gibran, “Work is love made visible.” And I think that is so much of what my own artwork is about; taking love and making it visible, and also that the process of creation for me is very much a loving one. As I’ve shared before, you know, my own journey, I learned early on once I graduated from law school and I had this real JD but I felt like a fake lawyer and I felt like a true artist but I had no art yet.

And a few months into that process, I realized I was quickly bringing the mindset that had made me very miserable in law school with me into art. So I did a hard stop right there and drew a line in the sand and decided, this art, for me, and making art and the process of creativity will forever be a dedication to and an exploration of and a cultivation of my humanness, my beingness, my spirituality, just as much as it is about the result of creating the art.

And then it was years later that I stumbled upon that quote from Robert Henri about, “The object is not to make art. The object is to be in the state that makes art inevitable.” Which then inspired my core philosophy for The Art School, which is we cultivate an extraordinary way of being that makes extraordinary results inevitable.

So, coming back to the energy that I put into my artwork, I very much believe that energy becomes saturated in the work itself, every bit as much as if I choose to use the color red or I choose to draw, paint in flowers or figures or trees, that the energy that, even though it’s invisible, is absolutely a part of the artwork and that it lives with that and travels with it to whoever then experiences the art.

And so with this victory series, I already have this idea of taking invisible forces that are very real and that I believe we need more of in this world

[The Art School Podcast](#) with Leah Badertscher

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

and making them visible through my art. And one of the motifs that already occurs through many of my pieces are wings.

And so when I was meditating on this wisdom from Yogi Bhanan, whenever you're facing anything, a challenge, and you don't have an answer, call inside yourself and say victory and lean on that word and make it a precious word, a guide word, and you'll find the strength of 100 angels at your back.

I have been in many places where I've used that and used that word and what I have found is that yes, not only do I personally – and you don't have to. And if you don't, I love whatever you believe and whatever belief means for you, that is wonderful. And for me, I do believe in a divinity that is not just through me but around me and can come in many different forms and through many different aspects.

And I was also raised Catholic, so we were raised with saying Angelus and Saint Michael the Archangel's prayer and it's not something unfamiliar or foreign to me. And so that was another reason this wisdom from Yogi Bhanan resonated very much with me. And then I realized something else. That through this practice of leaning on the word victory, that also what it does is it summons your own spirit, the best of your own spirit and it helps you strengthen your own spirit.

And victory to me – and this is the way I understand how Yogi Bhanan intended it too is not a victory that is about winning or domination or triumphing over others, but victory in a sense of the triumph of the human spirit, to flourish and unfold and bring forth love and beauty and generosity in the face of so many challenges. And we all face challenges in this lifetime.

So to me, victory is really about summoning that energy within you that helps you meet those triumphs in a way in which you become stronger and

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

a better person through the process and the world is better for you having summoned that energy and brought it through yourself and expressed yourself that way in the world.

To me, it's also you decide between victory and being a victim. And that was another thing that really inspired me to do this series because I could see, in my own path and process, too many times when I had succumbed to letting myself be a victim. And then it's so much of the work I see my beautiful and courageous clients doing is not succumbing to being a victim, not succumbing to being a victim of circumstance, of our own thought patterns, of failures.

What I see too much in the world is too much defeatedness, too much resignation and depression and hopelessness and despair. And I get it. Those are hard swamps to slog through. I know what it's like to work to bring yourself through that. And that's also why I love this other mantra of, like, come through for yourself, not in a way that exhausts you, but asking yourself to come through for yourself does summon that amazing human spirit.

And using this victory practice, I believe, really helps cultivate strength and support, not only from without you, not only from those 100 angels, however they show up, that will stand behind you, but also from within you. It calls forth your dignity and your divinity. And what I know is that it's too easy to fall into patterns of victimhood and to look around and see that that's the norm. But the vision I hold is this vision of the human spirit in each of us that is dignified and so wants that to express itself that way in the world and that what we need more of is to be told that, to be told that we have this nobility and this dignity and this divinity within us and how do we call that forth?

And that's so much of what my clients ask me. Like, how do I do this? And I will tell them, it's very much a day to day moment to moment practice, just

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

like if you were training for the Olympics, you wouldn't do it half-heartedly. You wouldn't show up at the gym once in a great while. You would really go for it.

And it sounds to people like it's going to be too much work, but I tell you what, it is too much work to live defeated. It is too much work to live as a victim. And it is the privilege of your life to learn how to come through for yourself, to learn how to be the one that blesses your day, your own work.

It is a privilege to saturate yourself, every day, immerse yourself in the highest possible energy and messages of strength and love and perseverance and grit, with love, coming through for yourself to come up with the training program that your soul is yearning for to make your life what your life can be.

So, as I've shared with you before, I'm really interested in what works. And so I am always exploring, in my own life, what can I do, what works? And for me, I had the inspiration to take what I was offered when I first heard this quote from Yogi Bhanan about the victory mantra and the victory practice. And I wanted to do more than just be delighted by it and think that's such a pretty thought that's so inspirational, but then not do anything else with it.

I really wanted to do what I always offer you, which is take the information and integrate it, use it in your life. And when I ask myself what that might look like, one of the very clear things that came through was the series of paintings. So for the victory series, I'm doing at least 100 paintings.

So very much in the same thought process where I set myself up for the podcast of saying I'm going to do one through 52 before I allow myself to go back and evaluate, I'm going to give myself to this practice as a devotional practice, and very much the same with the victory paintings, doing at least one through 100 and surrendering to the inspiration and

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

surrendering to the process and not overthinking and not overanalyzing but really immersing myself in a meditative practice that's very active, like I'm working and I'm creating things, and to immerse myself in that so it also becomes something I can offer the world, that it's not just for me but then it's also something that goes out into the world.

So what the practice looks like in particular is every painting will have some form of wings on it. And they are so far very colorful exuberant paintings and I love them. I don't have any professional photos ready yet, but I will put some of the ones I've just taken on my iPhone and there are some on my Instagram too that you can see of the ones that I've done so far. And each one seems to always emerge with its own personality and own personal meaning.

But the process that I begin with for each of them is that I inscribe victory at least 100 times onto whatever the substrate is. So for most of them so far, it's been a wood panel substrate. I've done a few on canvas. So I write the word victory 100 times at least. One painting has it on at least 1000 times, until I feel that I've got it, until it feels like I have really clicked into what victory energy means, to that beautiful essence of the strong human spirit, that dignity essence, that divine essence.

So writing it over and over again helps to put me in that flow state where I really feel connected to what victory energy is. And I love that being the foundation, the bottommost layer of the painting, and then everything builds upon that because I do believe that's not only a beautiful metaphor for life, but that is a beautiful practice, a pragmatic way of living life that is available to us.

What if we really thought that we could build our lives with bricks, victorious bricks, and that that was within our power to do so? So that is the beginning, the birth of the painting and the bottommost layer.

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

And then I will kind of intuitively write in any other words, prayers, blessings, mantras that I am feeling are connected and part of the spirit of that particular painting. I decide I'm not overthinking this, so I just go with it and I trust. So this whole victory practice too in my creative process, I'm always working on cultivating greater and greater trust of my instincts, of my intuition, of my connection to what wants to happen, and then it doesn't just come from my small mind and what it can think of, but it comes from a really exciting deeper place.

Things happen and come through that surprise and delight even me, and that is really fun when that happens. So then I'll write in perhaps some words and then start with imagery or shapes and then start to put down color. And many of these paintings so far have rays of colorful light, these colorful beams that emanate from the center, and then the heart center of the painting, I'll usually find that there's already a word there or I'll inscribe one and sometimes I'll lay down gold paint as the center, and then over the top of that, the painting, I wanted these to be more sculptural and more three-dimensional and to feel like they're coming out at you more.

So with many of these, what I've done is then craft wings out of various material. Sometimes it's like a heavy card stock or a thick cardboard. Other times it's water color paper or other thick canvas paper that I've done other paintings on. And then I cut wings out of this paper and I have lots of wings around my studio because I feel like the painting is asking for a particular set of wings.

So sometimes, I'll have a feeling of exactly what kind of wing, like what the look is and what the feel or the energy of the wings and I'll just make that. And other times, I'll look through the collection of wings I've made and let the painting try on different ones until I feel that click of, oh, that's it, these wings were meant for this painting.

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

And I'll lay that over the top. I have some things I do to make sure the wings don't lay flat down against the painting. Again, I want it to be more sculptural, so I build in little supports beneath the wings, so then in the next layer, what I do is when I pour resin, mix up the special resin concoction, and then I pour resin over the top and then that adheres the wings to the paintings so then it all becomes one piece of work. It's integrated now. It's one and then it's the process of babysitting and not letting things fall into the resin while it cures.

And sometimes I do. And I had a special painting I did called Forget Your Perfect Offering that a very extraordinary special woman ended up buying I'll tell you that story later. That's its own podcast episode. I've loved that painting and that story.

And so here is one of the main things I wanted to offer you today because even if you are not an artist who works with a medium – maybe your medium is life in general. Maybe your medium is business. Maybe your medium is raising a family, contributing to the world and exploring yourself in another way.

I do know that we are all creative and that the creative process has so much to offer each of us and we can get to know ourselves and deepen our relationship with ourselves and strengthen it and also learn more about the creative process that really sets our potential free in the world and helps us to be both successful and fulfilled.

So one of the takeaways that I really wanted to offer you today was this idea of tying the vision to then the small steps because, again, I could share with you just that introductory quote from Yogi BhaJan, and it's beautiful and it's inspiring and you can feel uplifted by that. But I want to do more than that and I want you to do more with it than that.

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

I want you to find the ways of, like, okay but then when the rubber meets the road, when there is a challenge in my life, when I'm having an argument with my spouse or my child or a coworker, when I have just been fired from my dream job, when I didn't get the dream opportunity, when I have the beautiful vision for the art I want to create but I'm not even staring at the blank canvas, but you are like five canvasses in and you are like, this is so not what the vision is, I want to give you something that works. And I do believe coming back to the concept that victory is possible in every single moment and trying to find for yourself what is that interior access where you align yourself in victory, especially in moments of challenge.

And so here's one tiny example from my own process because I realized lately, when I fall into, like, wanting to hurry or hustle too much or feel behind, I'm like, I need to get back on track. And that's not the energy that I want to bring into my creative process and I for sure don't want that energy being in art that I then share with someone else.

So I was coming back to just breaking things down into the small steps, because right now, I have probably 17 different victory works going on. And I had made the mental human error of all of a sudden thinking I should be able to get them all done in a week. And that's ridiculous. So it was bringing myself back to what I know is my most powerful creative state, which is being in love with the process, being open, and being deeply relaxed.

And I know there are people out there saying, like, how though am I supposed to produce something in the world and be deeply relaxed? And I think that is the master level challenge, my friends. I work with super high achievers, very successful people.

You all know how to create with lots of pressure and stress and beating yourselves up. That is child's play now. Next level is can you use the creative tension of you are still going to be wildly successful, very prolific and do it from a state of both surrender and relaxation and enjoyment?

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

That is next level. That is like using creative tension to call forth the you that is better than who you are. That is coming through for yourself, continuing to be very creative and do the work you want to do in the world and then also do it from a place of deep love and reverence for yourself and for the process.

So for me, I realized I was somehow thinking in my head, I needed to get all 17 done in a matter of a week. And I'm like, okay, bringing it back to what is true right now is that I am cutting out this little tiny – I was snipping out like a millimeter-sized piece of a wing just so that it had the right character on this wing. It's a small thing, but to me, I'm like, oh that makes the wing look how that wing wants to look on this particular paper and can I do that from a place of love and not micromanaging and perfectionism, but just joy, and that right now, can I not try to hurry my life along and get to the next thing, but right now can I be so in the moment that I am really just at one with the scissors moving along?

I had done a watercolor painting on watercolor paper and then I was cutting wings out to go with this for one of the victory paintings I'm working on is called Wild Thing because it just seems like it wants to be a wild thing, and so it kind of wanted some wild wings to go with it.

So I realized what a metaphor that is for how we often paralyze ourselves in our creative process is we think we can just purchase the outcome and we want to skip right over all the tiny consistent steps, the beautiful tiny consistent steps that get us there. But instead, if we allowed those tiny consistent steps to be every bit as meaningful and beautiful as the big vision, to not only have this blessing of the big vision but then to realize that so much of our work is transferring our mindset from, oh this is an obstacle, this is mundane, this is taking too long, this is beneath my vision, and instead turn that next tiny step into something that you bless with your full presence.

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

And like I talked on the podcast last week, you're building your soul in the world this way and the way you're building your soul matters. The how, the energy that you're bringing to it, because whatever you're creating as your body of work, as your offering in the world, in turn is creating your internal spirit.

And the thing I thought about this is, you know what the very next step leads to, in my specific instance, is I, cutting out around these corners, you know, one moment at a time, it does give me wings at the end of the process. And for so many of us, I know that's true, that our full attention and presence to the next smallest moment and calling within ourselves and saying the word victory in the next tiniest moment is what is going to give us wings.

This brings me to the part of the podcast where I want you to do more than just listen. I do want you to enjoy these podcasts and I don't want you to be solely entertained by them. I don't want for you that you just consume this information. I want you to take it, integrate it into your life, and make it truly transformational.

So what I want to offer you today is twofold. So first, you know, just like when I thought, why do I want to do this victory series, and part of it is if I think about my big why, what do I want to contribute to the world, what am I going to allow myself to dream I can contribute to the world, it's that I do believe in this vision of every human being, what it would look like if we knew our dignity and our divinity and we worked on ourselves so that our mindset, our emotional mastery, our spirituality, our physicality allowed that to be channeled and expressed and be out in the world as a strong and vibrant and as extraordinary as it was meant to be.

You would all be these examples of radiant human beings, of light and love, not because we had erased challenge, but because we had come through for ourselves in the face of challenge. So I want to give the world

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

more of this victory energy. And for you listening to know that you have the ability to cultivate that within you and that this tool, it could be very much a tool and then very much an experience of your life, a victorious experience moment by moment, day by day, and then also a life commitment to, hey, I can choose victory or I can choose to be a victim. And life is too precious.

I am going to choose victory. And that, for me, then through this artwork, that people are reminded of the dignity of their human spirit, of their divinity, like maybe it goes into a family home and the family talks about this, that this is part of their core family culture and philosophy, that they will encounter so much challenge as a family but individually and together collectively that they will come through in love and victory and allowing for the flourishing of their individual and collective spirits.

So, so many examples like that. So I want you to think about what is the deepest why for you? What do you want to bring to the world through your work? What is the kind of energy you want to bring through your work, no matter that is, no matter what your medium is?

And again, remember my example about there's the big vision and then there's the very humble step by step. I really believe in this. It's real, the energy, the love, and the human spirit, even though it's invisible, it's very real and very present. And you can feel it when it's not present in life.

So I want to bring more of that to life. And then it's also coupled with this very humble experience of being human where I make art that is laying paint down on a substrate and I make wings with scissors and paper or cardboard and materials. So it's both that very sacred to me, and it's also out of the very mundane materials of life.

So be onto yourself for any place you may be dismissing your opportunity to offer dignity, to come from dignity, divinity, just because you're dismissing the materials as it seems too small or too ordinary for you. Just

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

know that it's the energy that you bring to it that gives it, that blesses it. So be in the practice of blessing everything you do. That's the moment-to-moment how.

And then the second thing I wanted to offer you today was to share more of the specific instructions that Yogi Bhanan shared in this lecture, the same lecture from which came the "Lean into the word victory and you'll have the strength of 100 angels at your back.'

Later on, he goes on to say, "It's not something we're joking about. We're dead serious about it. And if you want to help somebody, give them this word," which is what I'm giving to you right now. "Basically, it's a chance to grow, a chance to be strong. Fit people will survive. Weak people will have difficulties, especially mental difficulties. It's a very simple system. There is not one person on this earth who will not have a challenge. Challenge eventually comes. You need vitality for victory."

And then he says, "If I start teaching you all the things and going through the rhythms and all that, it will take a century." This is what we've been talking about, about mastery. You can learn all the things and it will take so long. It will take a century, he's saying.

Then he goes back to saying, "but this victory practice, this is simple. You'll get confidence on the spot. You will feel the kick. You'll know something is with you better than you. That will give you headway for victory and you'll be fine. Remember, breathe in and mentally utter the word victory. Just breathe in for one, two, or three seconds. Repeat the word mentally, and after you say it, let the breath go.

Thank you so much for listening to another episode of *The Art School Podcast*. If you have enjoyed this episode, if you enjoy this podcast, the best thing you can do to pay it forward and to share this work with others is to share the podcast with friends, family, coworkers, acquaintances who

[The Art School Podcast](#) with Leah Badertscher

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

you think would also benefit from the work, and also to go to iTunes and leave a review. Thanks so much. I know it takes time out of your day. I appreciate the time that you take already to listen and be here with me and I am really grateful for those of you who take those extra five minutes and leave a review. It is so helpful. Thank you.

And for those of you that want to immerse yourself in even more victory energy, in all the things that we talk about on *The Art School Podcast*, you'll want to come over to my website www.leahcb.com and get on my mailing list. The programs I offer, for instance The Art School, is so much about immersing ourselves in this victorious kind of energy and in cultivating an extraordinary psychology, an extraordinary way of being in mind, body, and spirit.

Because I know that if you take the gifts you're given and you cultivate a strong beautiful heart, capable hands, a sharp and awake mind and a spiritual backbone stronger than steel, you are going to be able to flow so much more of what you have to give in this world, and so much more is going to be able to flow to you in return. I think too many people are afraid of being fully alive and truly living because either secretly or subconsciously, they don't believe they can deal.

They don't believe that they are equal to the dreams that they have to they stuff the dreams. But you can, every day, in small ways and in large ways, you can cultivate what you need so that you are, you are born to be the equal to this dream. And part of why you are here is that that dream then calls forth who you were meant to become. But you have to do the work. You have to get out into the world and do the work and that is what we're doing in The Art School. That's the deep dive intense work that I do with my private clients, just a handful of clients at a time, because it is a deep dive and intense work for both of us.

Ep #54: My Victory Practice

And that's what we're going to be doing going forward in fun, amazing, exciting ways. It's so much better in community in 2020 and beyond. So make sure you are on the mailing list to be the first to know about the retreats coming up. There are going to be shorter, special Art School programs, more live events, and also I currently have a waitlist for private clients, but beginning in January, I do have a couple more spots opening. So if you'd like to be on that waitlist and work with me intensely one on one, I'd love to talk to you about that too.

So, for the close today, I again want you to bring this down to the real nitty-gritty of your life. Yes, be inspired by leaning into victory and calling to your side and at your back forces, like, divine powerful forces, but also knowing that in each moment, you can summon your own dignity and divinity through you.

So remember this; in every moment, you have a choice. You can decide between victory and being a victim. My dream for you, for all of us, is that over and over again, we decide victory.

Have a victorious beautiful week, everyone, and I love that you're here. Thank you for listening. I'll see you next time.